THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT) : (a) and (b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has sent a consolidated revised proposal to Department of Telecommunications to consider various amendments in the TRAI Act, 1997 including amendment of Section 29 of TRAI Act which *inter-alia* provides for imposition of penalty on telephone operators for violation of its directions.

(c) and (d) Government has not so far taken any final decision in this regard

Universal service obligation charge

†3510. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD :
SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a cess as universal service obligation charge is being collected from each telephone subscriber in the country;

(b) if so, the total amount collected through it till June, 2009;

(c) the purpose for which this cess is collected from subscribers; and

(d) the amount spent till the end of June, 2009 for fulfilling the desired purpose out of the total amount collected so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Universal Service Levy (USL) is collected by the Government from various service providers (except pure value added service providers such as voice mail, e-mail etc.) operating in the country at the rate of 5% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR). As on 30 June, 2009 a total amount of Rs. 26,207.11 crores has been collected as USL since the inception of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in April, 2002.

(c) The USL is collected to raise resource for meeting the Universal Service Obligation (USOF) for providing telecommunication services in rural and remote areas of the country.

(d) As on 30 June, 2009, out of the total collection of Rs. 26,207.11 crores, Rs. 8,378.88 crores have been disbursed for USO Fund activities and Rs. 6,948 crores have been reimbursed to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) towards payment of license fee and spectrum charges to Department of Telecommunications.

Independent Spectrum Regulator

3511. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE : Will the Minister of COMMUNI-CATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been actively considering to set up an Independent Spectrum Regulator to solve spectrum related issues in the country;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.